

Canada Post Office Dept

MODERN MERCURY

Government
Publications



CAI
PO
-39MSS


3 1761 11708427 7

PRICE
15
CENTS

LIBRARY
Pres
JAN 13 1939
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

ISSUED BY AUTHORITY OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL





INTRODUCTION

BY THE
HON. J. C. ELLIOTT, B.C.L., D.C.L., K.C., M.P.
POSTMASTER GENERAL

Today perhaps more than ever before the need of co-operative effort and the value of goodwill is apparent. Business generally and in particular Public Service and Utility Corporations are alert to this need. The creation of a friendly atmosphere among their customers and potential users of their services is now foremost in their promotional activities.

The Post Office Department of Canada, a combination of a great business corporation and a government department, operating what is perhaps the greatest public service organization in the world, has not been slow in recognizing the value of public co-operation in the great task before it in adequately serving the Canadian people.

The Postal Service carries alike the letters of the young and the old, the social invitation and the business document. No other department reaches so intimately into the lives of the people. To bring this home in a striking fashion, picture the effect locally and worldwide of a suspension of the Postal Service.

In meeting new needs and in securing that essential co-operation in conducting existing services, it is necessary for the Department to keep in close contact with its patrons. In the business world this contact is termed "Public Relations".

For some time past the Post Office Department has endeavoured to make known to its ten million shareholders throughout the country, the varied and widespread Postal facilities provided for their use. It has been gratifying to observe that there has been an awakening of the public realization of the particularly intimate relationship existing between the Post Office and the people in their daily contacts.

"A Modern Mercury" is not intended to be a complete story of every phase of Postal activity, but it does depict some interesting aspects of the various stages of mail handling and other details of this public service established and operated for public benefit. It is hoped the reader will gain a wider knowledge and appreciation of the workings and problems of the Post Office in providing a Postal Service.

The Post Office needs the "Goodwill" of the public and in so far as this feeling of confidence and understanding prevails between the Postal Service and its shareholders, the Department will be able to derive from the public suggestions and co-operation for a better performance of its work.



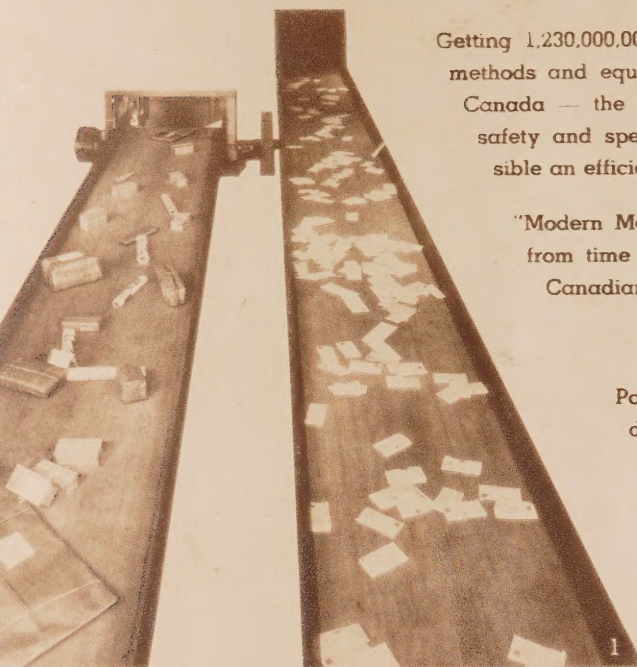
LETTER POST

Getting 1,230,000,000 pieces of mail delivered each year calls for organization methods and equipment which does credit to the biggest single business in Canada — the Post Office. The whole system of mail handling is based on safety and speed with modern machinery playing a big part in making possible an efficient service.

"Modern Mercury" in picture form shows you how your mail is handled from time of posting to delivery, as well as many other details of the Canadian Postal System.

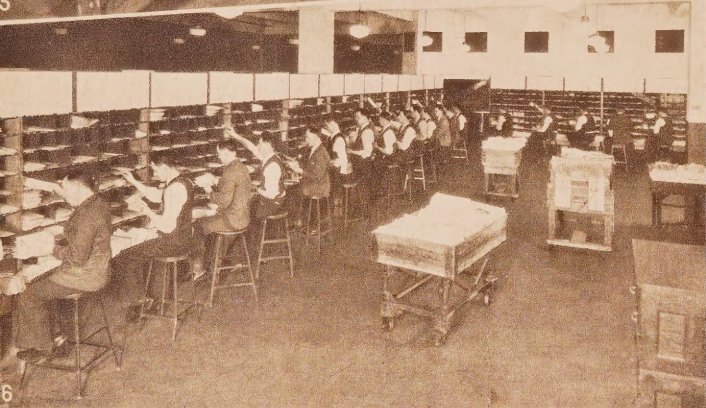
YOUR LETTER IS ON ITS WAY

Posted in the letter slot at the Main Post Office, your letter drops down the chute to the



1. Automatic Belt Conveyor and is swiftly carried to the upper floor from which it works its way down through the various handlings.
2. and 3. The stream of letters passes in front of an operator who directs the flow to any one of a number of
4. Facing up Tables below. Here the thousands of letters are being arranged to permit rapid cancellation of the postage stamps in the
5. Electric Cancelling Machine which also places the familiar date-stamp on letters at the rate of 40,000 per hour and speeds your letter on its way to the
6. Sortation Cases — Here specially trained operators rapidly segregate the letters for onward despatch.
7. After sorting, the letters, tied in bundles, are labelled and thrown into Mail Bags hanging on metal racks labelled for destination.





8. The closed and labelled bags pass down chutes to the lower level of the Post Office and then

9. to the outgoing train.

10. A Postal Car is a miniature Post Office where last minute sorting and other operations expedite delivery.

At destination mail is rushed from the train direct to the Post Office.

11. The Automatic Elevator is a device which facilitates this operation.



12. and 13. More Belt Conveyors advance the mail to the Opening Pool where the bags are opened and the letters advanced to the sorters

14. Expert employees familiar with the City streets and the exact route of each

15. Letter Carrier, who, prior to departure on his route, makes a final arrangement of his mail for a systematic house-to-house delivery.

16. A convenient letter slot in the door enables the Letter Carrier to deliver your letter safely without delay or inconvenience to the household.



PARCEL POST

In addition to the immense volume of letters carried, the Post Office handles each year some 40,000,000 parcels weighing from a few ounces up to the 25 lb. limit of weight. . . . Added parcel facilities are provided in the C.O.D. and Insurance systems. The C.O.D. system facilitates selling by mail. The Post Office collects the

amount due and remits it to the sender. . . . The Insurance system protects the sender against loss, rifling and damage—FREE INSURANCE—in Canada up to \$50.00. Parcel Post service also extends to all countries in the world.

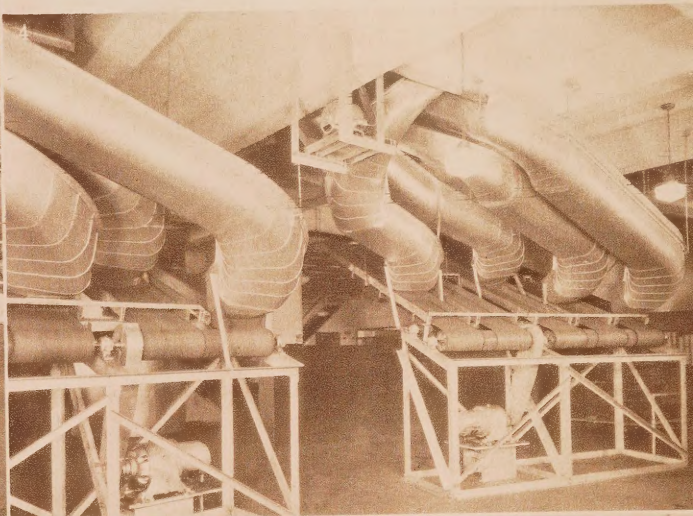
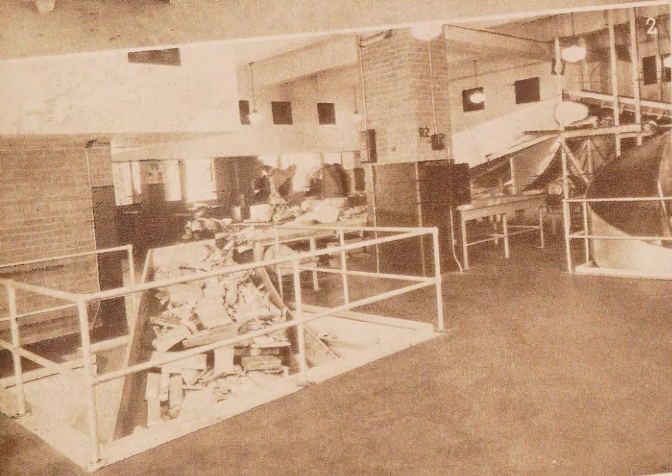
Mechanical devices facilitate rapid handling of parcels of all shapes and sizes.

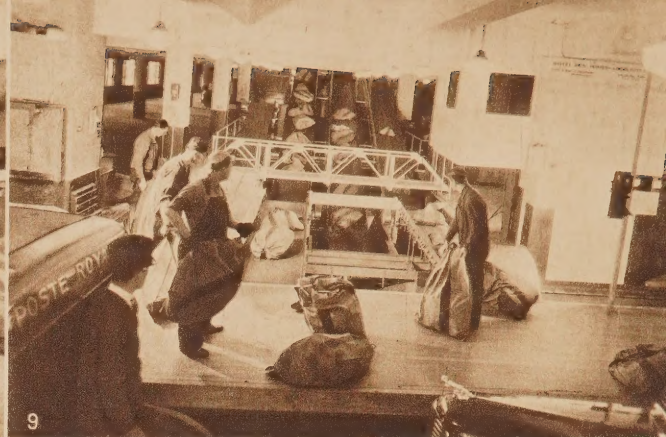
1. Post Office trucks collect parcels from street boxes and bring them to the Post Office. Hundreds of bags of parcels which have just reached the Post Office are being placed on moving belts and are carried to the

2. Opening Pool where the bags are emptied on to automatic belts leading to chutes down which the parcels slide to the

3. Modern belt distributor—this belt can be stopped and started as required by the sorters who are sorting the parcels on to separation belts, each leading to a different sorting division, which advance the parcels further to the

4 and 5. Chutes leading directly to the bag racks for final sortation into outgoing bags.





6, 7 and 8. The operator in this picture is dropping the bags down a chute to the despatching platform where the trucks are loaded for immediate conveyance to the train.

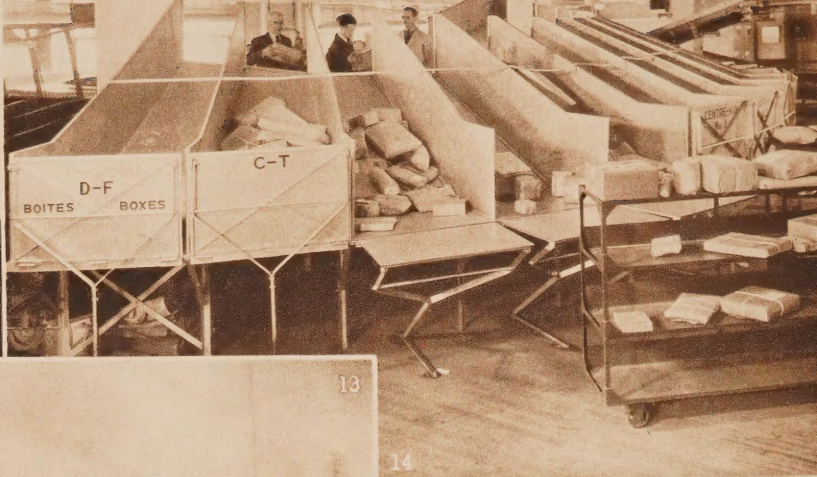


9, 10 and 11. AT DESTINATION the bags are brought to the receiving platform and are swiftly carried by conveyor belts to the upper levels of the Post Office where they are opened and date-stamped on the inspection table.

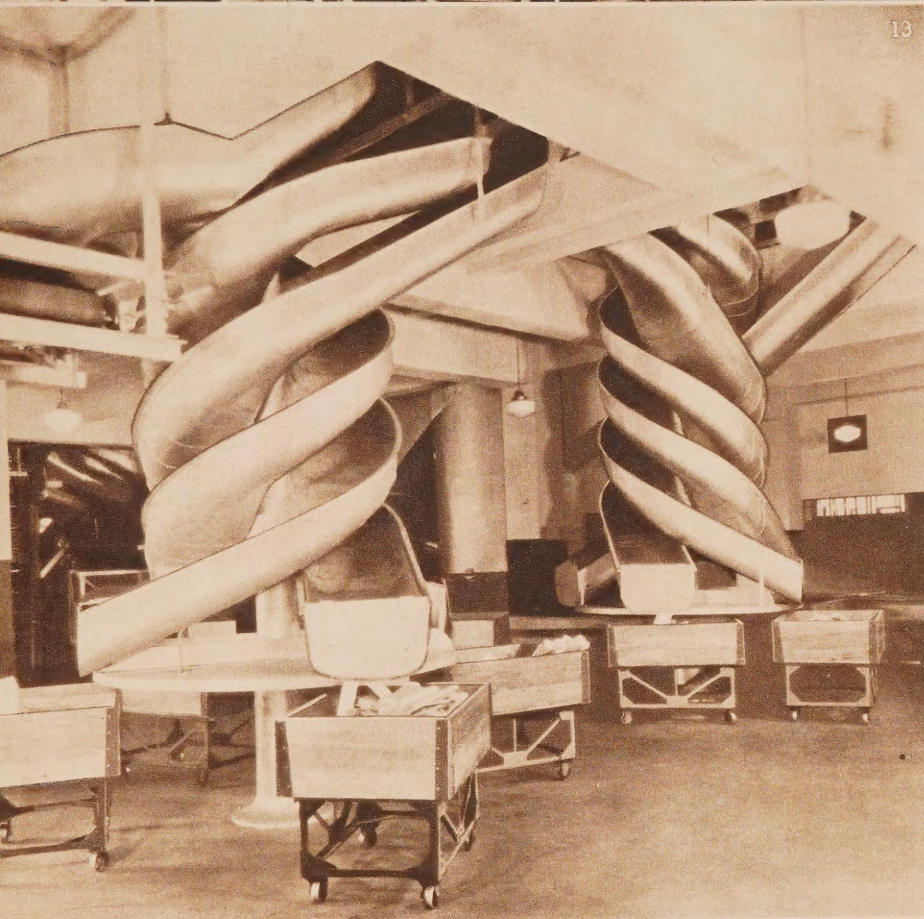




12



13



14

12. The parcels are being sorted from the distributor belts on to the various separation belts.

13 and 14. They then pass down the spiral chutes for final sortation into boxes or bins in readiness for delivery.

15. Here you see the smartly uniformed chauffeurs arranging the parcels for systematic delivery from the Post Office delivery trucks.



15



PHILATELIC SERVICE

Stamp collecting, or "Philately", has become the absorbing hobby of millions in every civilized country. To meet a world-wide demand for direct philatelic service to the individual collector, a special Division of the Financial Branch, Post Office Department, Ottawa, looks after this work.

The Canadian Post Office Department stands ready to give the stamp collector speedy and expert philatelic service, but makes no effort to stimulate artificial interest in its stamp issues.

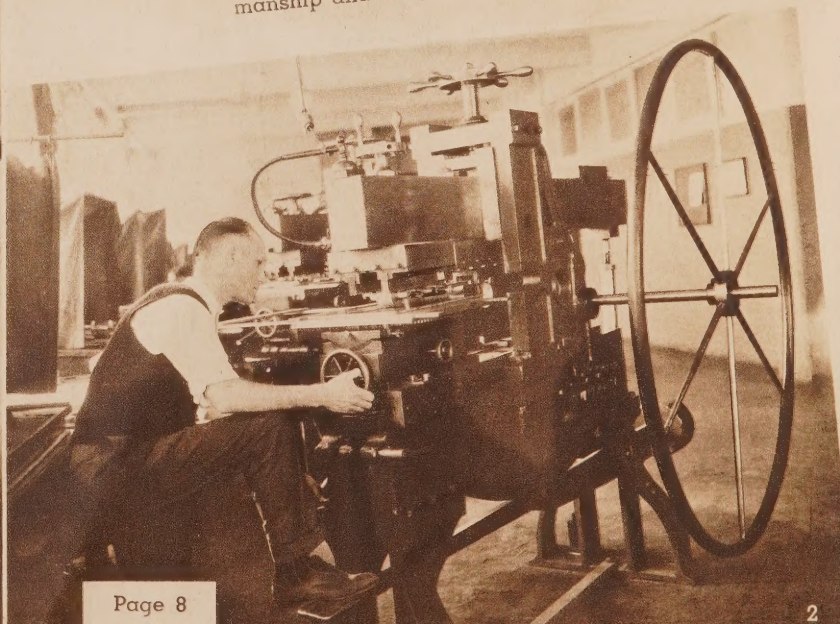
Canada's postage stamps are produced by the line-engraved process, as distinct from the cheaper methods in use in many countries today. Line-engraving lends unequalled artistic interest and value to stamps. It is an ancient craft that goes back to the Middle Ages. Critics say that some Canadian stamps have achieved distinction in the realm of abstract art.

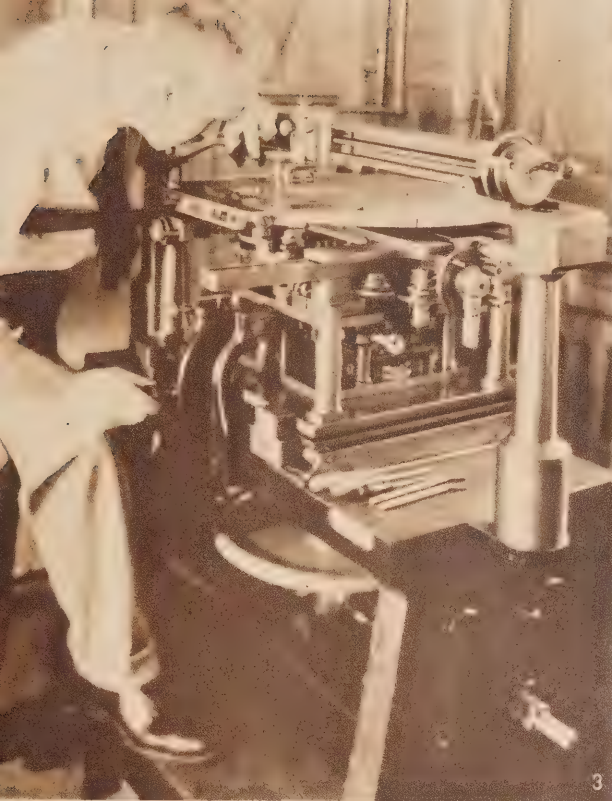
Canadian postage stamps are manufactured primarily for utility, yet they are favourites among stamp collectors. The total output runs to nearly two billions per annum. The Canadian people use many more stamps per capita than most people.

The Threepenny "Beaver" Stamp. Canada's first postage stamp, issued in 1851, still stands as a symbol of the industry and sagacity which have made Canada fifth among the trading nations of the world.

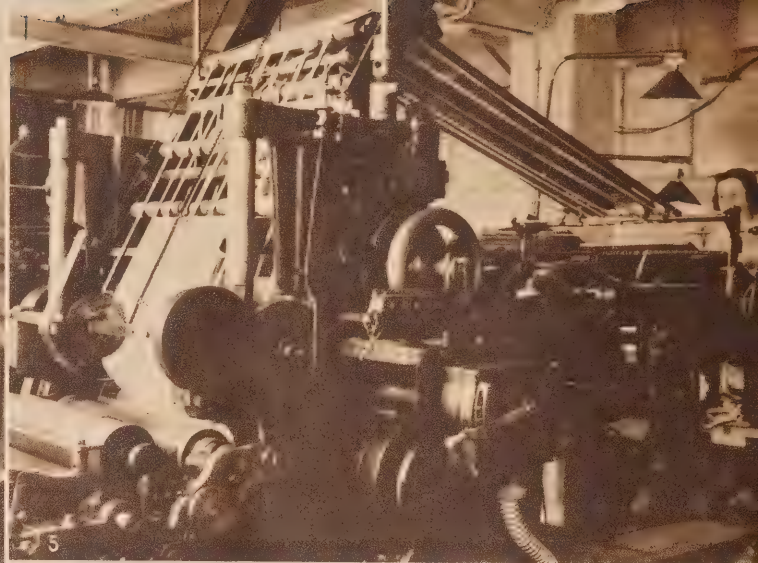


The "Bluenose" Stamp. To Canada belongs the distinction of having produced the stamp said to be the most beloved by stamp collectors—the world-famous "Bluenose" stamp of 1928. The international champion fishing-schooner "Bluenose" illustrates three major phases of Canadian Maritime life and industry—shipbuilding, seaman-ship and deep-sea fishing.

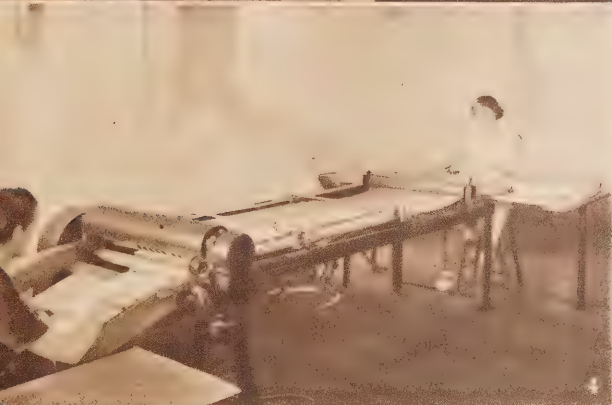




3. *Geometric Lathe for Engraving Intaglio on Steel.*



4. *Postage Stamp Perforating Machine.* Extreme care is taken to prevent errors and defects in stamps, yet odd items get out occasionally in the regular issue. These are highly valued by collectors. It is their rarity that makes them valuable.



5. *Rotary Postage Stamp Printing Press.*

6. The Entrance to the Philatelic Division Financial Branch, Post Office Department, Ottawa. If you are interested in stamp collecting, write to this address

1. *Stamp Engraver at Work.* Skill and artistry of almost incredible delicacy enter into the engraving of stamps. Engravers serve an apprenticeship of about fifteen years. Their work must be beyond the skill of forgers.

2. *Steel Plate Transferrer Making Steel-Engraved Printing Plate.*



TRANS-CANADA AIR MAIL





A I R M A I L

Aviation perhaps means more to Canada than almost any other country in the world.

Canada is a country of great distances, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Southern border to the Arctic Ocean. Some 70% of the total area of the Dominion is dependent upon air transportation. There are no railways north of the Prairie belt, and until the aeroplane rolled back the frontiers, this Northern territory remained "the Frozen North".

Discoveries of recent years have proven this hinterland north of the railways to be a fertile field for development and the eyes of the world have been focused on its immense mineral wealth.

The advent of the aeroplane has been a boon to Northern Canada, not only in the carriage of mails but in the rapid development of its northern resources. Through the transporting of machinery and equipment to the mining centres, and in bringing out the ore, Canada

has led the world in the handling of freight by air. The present services to these areas are the greatest non-subsidized air traffic systems in the world.

During the years Canada was concentrating upon opening up the rich Northern districts, inter-city air mail services did not measure up to world progress generally. This situation has been rapidly remedied, however, and the "Trans-Canada" air service gives promise of becoming one of the world's leading air transportation systems..

Passengers as well as mail will be carried on the Trans-Canada System which will provide the latest in luxury passenger equipment. The aeroplanes are outfitted with perhaps the most comfortable seats supplied in any aircraft operating on passenger airlines. Individual, full reclining and swivelling type seats are provided, each accompanied with added facilities including a reading lamp and separate air conditioning control.

The appointments throughout the entire passenger accommodation are luxurious and specially designed to provide the utmost in comfort and relaxation.

The seating capacity has actually been deliberately reduced in order to ensure increased comfort for each passenger.

An air system of the magnitude of the Trans-Canada Airways calls for the establishment of specially constructed and equipped air ports, the location of radio-beam stations throughout the country, as well as provision for the essential meteorological service and direct communication with all weather reporting bureaus and the central meteorological bureau.

In every stage of the development safety has been a first consideration. Each link of the chain is carefully tested so that Canadians will be able to feel that no measure has been neglected to safeguard the airways. With the completion of the Trans-Canada Airways, business and social intercourse between our





LOADING MAIL. A checking system is maintained as a safeguard at all air ports.

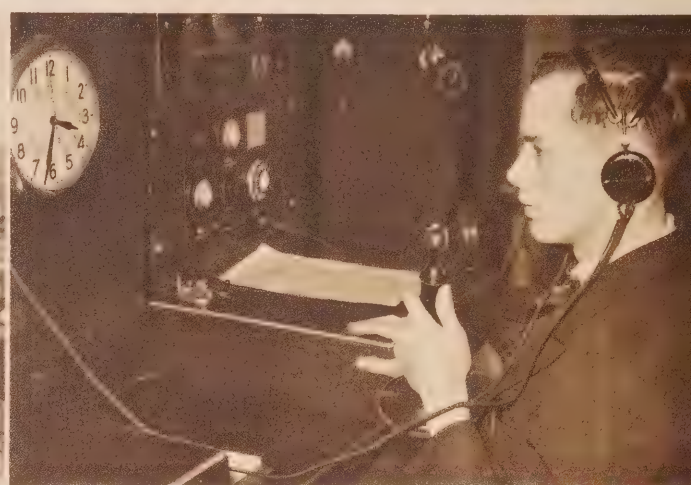


REFUELING is a speedy operation in charge of efficient ground operators.



TRAFFIC CONTROL. From the roof of the airport control tower a traffic control projector flashes powerful signals to planes about to land or take off. Different coloured lights direct the traffic.

From the roof where he can see the exact position of all traffic in the air or on the ground, the Trans-Canada operator handles radio transmission to the plane as it approaches the boundary of the airport.



RADIO COMMUNICATION.—Ground station operator maintains contact with planes in flight, giving pilots the latest information concerning weather ahead. Pilots confirm their positions on the course, also describe weather conditions to assist other pilots. Aircraft in flight look to radio as the only practical means of communication with the earth. Over the radio the pilot gets directional guidance, information regarding the cloud ceiling, visibility at the airport ahead, barometric pressure, temperature, wind direction and velocity and other information that will effect a successful flight.

scattered provinces will be greatly simplified. Vancouver and other Prairie cities will be reached over night from Montreal and Toronto. The Maritime Provinces will be an afternoon or evening flight from Ottawa.

While this land service is forging ahead the Trans-Oceanic service has not been neglected and each day brings nearer the time when a regular Trans-Atlantic route will be operated on a schedule basis.

Always in a fortunate geographical position as an important link in the Empire chain of communication services, Canada still holds first place in the new Empire air mail scheme.

Canada's position is particularly favourable as the shortest routes to both Europe and Asia lie over her territory. But it is not to European and Asiatic countries only that Canada will be able to send mail via air. Already we have many connections with the United States Airway net work extending to all points in Central and South America.

Nationally and Internationally Canada's transportation future is in the skyways. The dreams of yesterday are the accomplishments of today. The future holds scarcely a limit in air mail possibility.



THE POST OFFICE IS A FINANCIAL INSTITUTION

Aside from its part in delivering your mail, the Post Office is one of Canada's big financial institutions through its Money Order and Postal Note systems and the Post Office Savings Bank.

Approximately \$1,000,000 in cash received from postmasters is transferred daily by the Post Office Financial Branch to the Finance Department. This and other financial transactions involve the receipt of some 76,000 vouchers and forms daily by the Financial Branch.

Modern accounting systems furnish protection at every point — up-to-date equipment eliminates errors and ensures speed with accuracy.

1. and 2. Operators of the key punching machines "punch" Money Order or Postal Note data on special audit cards used in the mechanical accounting system.

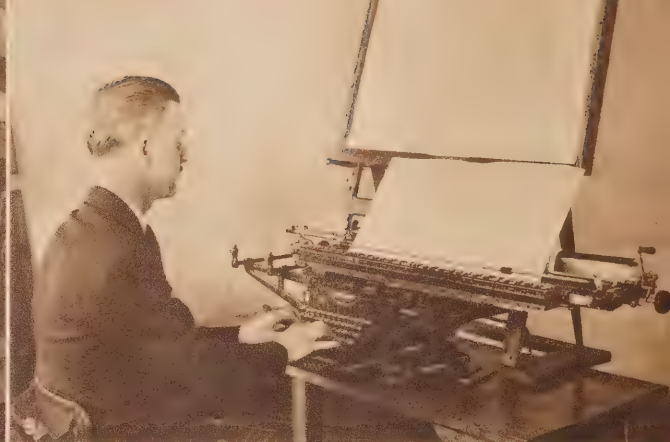
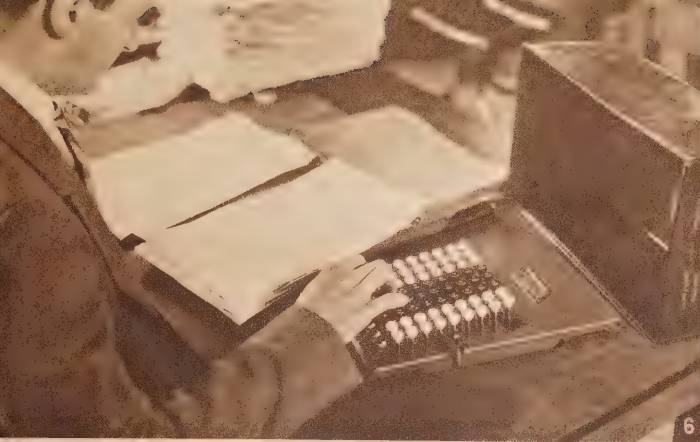


3. and 4. The perforated cards are next placed in the automatic sorting machine which segregates them at the rate of 450 per minute, (125,000 per day).

5. An "up-to-the-minute" audit is obtained from the Printing Tabulator which adds and prints 120 lines of figures each minute.

6. Skilled Comptometer operators check accuracy of postmasters' money order accounts, (2,000 per day).





7. and 8. A cash account posting machine enables the operator to "post" over 300 cash accounts each day.

9. A multiple column summarizing machine equipped with twenty-eight vertical and two cross totalizers is used to post and summarize postmasters' ledger accounts. The operator, with the use of this machine, adds each vertical

column and, at the same time, cross adds the debits and deducts the credits, producing automatically a correct balance.

10. Electric key punching machines and (11) accounting machines facilitate Post Office Banking, as well as the issuing and auditing of salary cheques of over 11,000 postmasters throughout Canada.



PURCHASING A MONEY ORDER OR POSTAL NOTE

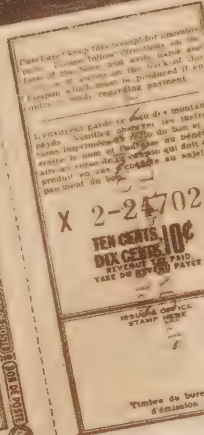
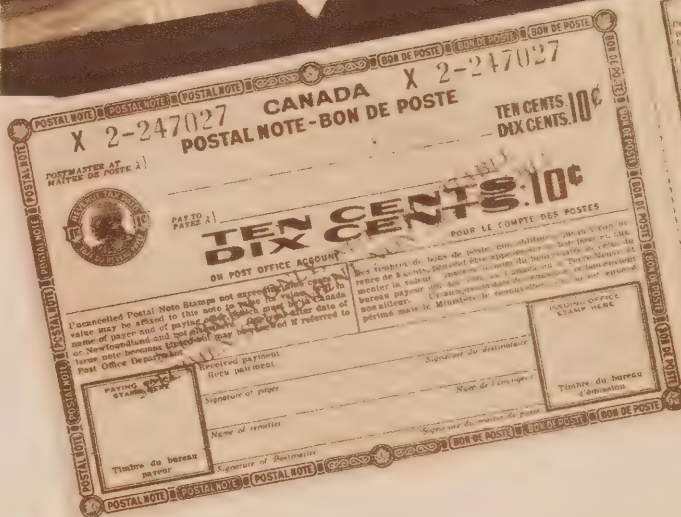
Over 14,000,000 Money Orders were issued last year with an aggregate value of approximately \$144,000,000. Money Orders are sold at over 6,800 Post Offices in Canada. Convenient hours — low rates — world-wide service contribute to the popularity of this service.

POSTAL NOTES

Convenient as cash — Sold and cashed at more than 11,000 post offices in Canada. Last year over 7,000,000 Postal Notes were issued, amounting in value to more than \$12,000,000.

SAVINGS BANK

The Post Office does its part in encouraging thrift. In accounts ranging from \$1.00 to \$5,000 the Post Office Savings Bank has over \$22,000,000 on deposit.



Cultivate the habit of thrift. One Dollar opens an account in the Post Office Savings Bank — save regularly and provide for an old age of comfort and ease.



TRANSPORTATION

Carrying letters and parcels from Post Office to Post Office, and from Post Office to the addressee, is an important phase of Mail handling which calls for the use of many methods of conveyance.

1. In the country as well as cities, a Mail Box is representative of the Postal Service. Here you see a Rural Route Courier—a familiar and popular figure in rural life—delivering mail in a rural mail box. Through it the farmer is brought within easy reach of the city.

2. In cities "Baby" trucks ensure low-cost transportation and speedy delivery and collection service.

3. Representing a past era—formerly the sole link between the "end of steel" and the frontiers of the North—the Dog Team has been outmoded by the aeroplane in Northern territory.

4. The demand for speed and still more speed has resulted in the old style engines being replaced by modern streamlined locomotives, adding miles per hour and reducing operating costs.

5. Canadian Steamships busily ply from port to port, linking Canada with all parts of the postal world.



E R R O R S

on your part delay your mail and add to the worries of the Postal Service.

1. Over 2,000,000 items reach the Dead Letter Office each year. This employee has opened a "Dead Letter" to ascertain the sender's address, and is returning the letter, in a special envelope, subject to a postage charge.
2. Incorrectly and illegibly addressed mail is sent to the Directory Section—These men are looking up correct street addresses.
3. Short paid letters are annoying to your friends from whom "Postage due" is collected on delivery. Overweight letters are weighed and endorsed to indicate the amount of postage to be collected on delivery.
4. Oversized or very small envelopes cannot pass through the Cancelling Machine, and are laid aside for Hand cancelling. Envelopes not larger than $9\frac{1}{2}$ " x $4\frac{1}{8}$ " or smaller than 4" x 3" speed delivery.

POSTAL POINTERS

Address your mail fully, clearly and without misleading abbreviations . . . Place your return address in the upper left hand corner . . . Never enclose coins or other hard objects in letters . . . Send remittances by Post Office Money Order or Postal Note . . . Properly pack parcels . . . Prepay postage fully . . . Place the stamps in the upper right hand corner . . . Register valuable articles . . . Give your correspondents your correct Post Office address . . . Mail early.



REGISTRATION

Register all letters of value—Special safeguards have been established for the protection of registered mail—Up-to-date safety equipment is used and there is a hand to hand transfer of every registered item which practically guarantees delivery.

In the event, however, of loss, rifling or damage while in the mails, indemnity claims are paid.

1. Registration Branch—opening and checking bags of registered mail.

2. Preparing registered mail for local delivery—registered mail is sorted into all metal cases, equipped with safety locks which are locked when the employee is not actually working at the cabinet. The registered mail is separated according to letter carrier routes and then

arranged in the portable locked case in which it is carried to the

3. Glass enclosed wicket where the letter carriers are signing for the registered mail they are taking out for delivery on their routes.

A receipt is obtained on delivery of every registered article.



SPECIAL DELIVERY



For fast service, letters and parcels are delivered by Special Delivery Service in Canadian cities and throughout the United States.(Letters only).

A "Special Delivery" stamp, or ordinary stamps to cover the Special Delivery fee, plus regular postage and the words "Special Delivery" on letters or parcels ensures immediate treatment at destination. Safety is again a factor—at these wickets the special messengers are signing for Special Delivery letters and parcels prior to immediate delivery.

A Special Delivery Letter commands attention.



Mr. Eddies Jones
300 Mount St.
Lisbon
Ireland

